

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, June 12, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. The Brighton, Atlantic City, N.J. June 12th, (1880) My dear Mrs. Bell:

I was very glad to hear from you the other day. It certainly had seemed a long time since last you wrote and I would have asked you whether you were all safe and flourishing if I had not been so busy and tired myself. I suppose you must have heard of our having left Washington a fortnight ago. The heat there was intense, though hardly as great as that in New York or Philadelphia and we were thankful to get down here by the cool seaside. It seemed to us so delightful that we tried to get a cottage and stay here for a month and write you to come down and enjoy it with us, but we found that everything was already engaged, so we have been staying on here waiting for Alec to decide what we shall do while he is detained in Washington finishing his work and writing his specifications and scientific papers, which last two seems to me more hopeless tasks for him than anything else. This is a very large hotel, but by no means the largest in this little upstart city of summer residents, begun, continued and supported entirely by citizens of Philadelphia who make this their summer home as it is but two hours from the city by rail and the climate so uniform that it is little cooler in winter when the snow is on the ground in Philadelphia than it is now. I wonder if you would like this for a home, the only thing is that it is very lonely in winter, only a few 2 of the hotels open. Elsie thinks it very good fun playing on the beach with her little pail and shovel and has grown brown and rosy in the process. There are plenty of horses too, and she has been out to ride twice on one of the prettiest and tiniest ponys I ever saw. I have dressed her in a sailor suit and she looks very cunning and to tell the truth decidedly boyish in it. But boys and girls are dressed so much alike now it is sometimes hard to tell difference. I suppose you have heard that story of the little boy in church who when ordered to take off his hat meekly remonstrated "please sir,

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I'm a little girl!" Elsie's latest idea now is that "Babie big monkie" (monkey) I am inclined to think that the Hindoos must be right, and that in some distant time she was a scientific man and follower of Darwin, and this idea is a relic of her former state, for how otherwise she got the idea of the baby's being a big monkey I don't know. The little one grows fast and is now a big, strong, healthy baby, beginning to notice Elsie and to play with her. This morning I held the baby on Elsie's shoulders and the little things trotted around while it would be hard to tell who enjoyed it the most or laughed the loudest. Elsie has learned to shake the rattle or turn the music-box handle to stop the baby's crying and sometimes she hurries so fast and gets so excited that she can not do anything but dance like mad and defeat her own efforts with the music-box.

Alec and I have such a delightful idea for spending the summer, but as it seems to good to be possible I will not tell you about it until we decide one way or the other. Alec comes up 3 tomorrow, I hope bringing Charlie, then we can talk over it. I had a cablegram from Papa in London wanting to know how we and Charlie were. I suspect Berta was a little troubled about Charlie. He seemed in very good spirits and nearly well when I saw him last.

I hope the measles have run their course by this time and done no serious damage.

Much love to you all.

Affectionately, Mabel.